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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 003799

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: CABINET RUMORS

REF: KABUL 3625

Classified By: Acting PolCounselor Victoria Alvarado for reasons 1.4 (b)
) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Following President Karzai's inaugural day assertion that "the ministers of Afghanistan must possess integrity and be professionals serving the nation," both Afghans and internationals are awaiting Karzai's announcement of his Cabinet picks. Karzai's candidates must be confirmed by a majority vote of Parliament's lower house, which is scheduled to recess from December 6 to January 21. Parliament may be willing to delay its recess by a week to accommodate the Cabinet confirmation process. Meanwhile, exhaustive speculation continues over how Karzai will balance his public commitment to bring competent, skilled ministers into his government with his desire to reward the warlords who helped put him in office (ref). The Director of the Palace Office of Administrative Affairs (OAA) has provided us the latest assessment of the current state of horse-trading for the ministerial positions. Some of the possible Cabinet candidates are affiliated with the Iranian Republican Guard Corps (IGRC), including candidates for the Ministries of Transportation, Education, and possibly one or two others associated with Iran. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Following President Karzai's inaugural speech, in which he promised that "the ministers of Afghanistan must possess integrity and be professionals serving the nation," Afghans and internationals alike are awaiting Karzai's announcement of his Cabinet. His candidates must be confirmed by a majority vote of Parliament's lower house, which is scheduled to recess from December 6 to January 21. We understand, however, that Parliament may be willing to delay its recess by a week to accommodate the Cabinet confirmation process. Meanwhile, exhaustive speculation continues over how Karzai will balance his public commitment to bring competent, skilled ministers into his government with his private commitments to reward the warlords who helped put him in office. An Afghan Embassy employee close to the Director of the Palace's OAA has provided us the latest assessment of the current state of horse-trading for the ministerial positions.

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A View From The Palace
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¶3. (C) On November 24, OAA Director Sader Mudaber told us he expects the following individuals to comprise President Karzai's new Cabinet:

--Foreign Affairs: Dr. Anwari Ahadi. Ahadi holds an MBA and PhD from Northwestern University, as well as degrees in Economics and Political Science from the American University of Beirut. He is the leader of the Pashtun nationalist party, Afghan Mellat.

--Interior Affairs: Hanif Atmar. Minister Atmar is expected to remain in this position.

-- Transportation: Zarar Ahmand Moqbel. Moqbel was a former Minister of Interior Affairs, but his performance was considered weak. He is close to President Karzai. Reportedly, has also maintains ties to the Iranian Republican Guard Corps (IRGC).

-- Education: Ahamad Mushahed. Mushahed is currently Director of the Civil Service Commission. He reportedly has ties to the IRGC. According to our OAA contact, Mushahed does not have the capacity to perform at the ministerial level.

--Commerce: Mr. Aylaqi. Aylaqi is reportedly one of five ministerial cedes Karzai made to place Sh'ias in the Cabinet (three of whom will be named by Haji Mohammad Muhaqqeq, and two by Karzai). Aylaqi was mayor of Kabul under President Najibullah's term. He now heads a multi-national business, and is also a senior advisor to the Ministry of Commerce.

--Finance: Omer Zakhiwal. Minister Zakhiwal is expected to retain his position.

--Culture: Said Makhdom Rahin. Rahin is currently Ambassador to India. He served previously as Minister of Culture but lost out on a confidence vote by Parliament, reportedly due to his failure to cultivate support among warlords. He is considered to be open-minded and scholarly.

--Counter-Narcotics: Gulab Mangal. Mangal is former Governor of Laghman, and currently Governor of Helmand. He is close to Karzai and Education Minister Wardak. According

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to our Interagency Provincial Affairs Office (IPA), Mangal has implemented innovative programs in Helmand province that have made inroads in Helmand's poppy-producing areas.

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Taking Care of Me and Mine
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14. (C) Mudaber mentioned that the designation of a number of other potential Cabinet candidates remains in flux. However, he noted that Professor Rabbani has likely obtained a ministerial post for one of his sons (probably Salahuddin), and either a ministerial post or ambassadorship for another son. Professor Abdul Rasul Sayyaf's share of the spoils will likely be two ministries. Current Minister of Water and Energy Ismail Khan is lobbying to become Governor of Herat and wants to designate two unnamed ministers.

15. (C) Not to be outflanked, Abdul Rashid Dostum is angling to gain two ministries for his Junbesh Party supporters:

--Faizullah Zaki: Zaki is a Member of the Lower House, Chair of the Environment Committee, and Deputy of the Uzbek Junbesh Party. Zaki could be in line to become Minister of Mines.

-- Mohammad Shaker Kargar: Kargar is also a member of the Lower House, Deputy of the International Relations Committee, and Junbesh member. His wife is Russian, he was educated in Russia, and is believed to receive significant financial support from Russia, Uzbekistan, and Turkey. Kargar served as Minister of Water and Energy in Afghanistan's 2002 transitional government and wants to return to that position.

16. (C) According to Mudaber, Karzai set aside five ministries for Sh'ias (three of whom will be named by Muhaqqeq, the other two by Karzai). Mudaber knew of only of Muhaqqeq's preferences:

--Mohammed Nateqi. Nateqi was former Ambassador to Libya, and is currently an MFA advisor. While Mudaber does not know to which ministry Nateqi will be designated, Nateqi reportedly maintains links to the IRGC. Mudaber also

mentioned that Mohaqqueq aspires to be Governor of Balkh Province.

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Lower-Level Maneuvers
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¶7. (C) Regarding likely appointments below the ministerial level, Mudaber shared the following:

--Dr. Rangin Spanta is reportedly tapped to become Afghanistan's Ambassador to the UN, or possibly to serve as Senior Advisor for International Relations.

--Current Minister of Commerce will run the Central Bank.

--Current Presidential Chief of Staff Omar Daudzai may return to Tehran as ambassador.

--Current Afghan Ambassador to the United States Said Jawad is lobbying to become Foreign Affairs Minister.

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The Balancing Act
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¶8. (C) COMMENT: President Karzai must wrestle with the dilemma of how to manage the expectations of his supporters and those of the international community. He has promised more than he can deliver, and will be unable to reconcile all of the competing demands of his diverse constituencies. His public commitment to install qualified, corruption-free technocrats to his new cabinet and other key government positions starkly contrasts with the expectations of the warlords who helped his re-election. Some Afghan interlocutors, perhaps displaying too much optimism, tell us that Karzai has compiled two lists. The first list could be a "trial balloon" replete with warlord-backed candidates -- including names he knows the international community will veto. Karzai, the argument goes, would at least be able to demonstrate to his warlord followers that he had done his utmost, and the foreigners were to blame for any objections. Further, some candidates on the first list would pass muster. President Karzai would then proffer a second, cleaner list containing more qualified and clean candidates. END COMMENT.
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